

(Child  
Psychiatrist)

WILLIAM C. BRUNS, M.D.

The writer is president of the Metro Omaha Medical Society.

Omaha World Herald  
# - 3 - 96

## 'TV Violence Helps Fuel Epidemic'

Violence has become a public health epidemic. As a nation, the United States ranks first among all developed countries in homicides. Among the country's youths aged 15 to 24, homicide is the second-leading cause of death, and for African American youths it is first.

In recent polls, Americans listed crime as the No. 1 problem facing our society. I believe Omaha is no exception.

Indisputably, media violence contributes to real-life violence. After 10 years of research, the National Institute of Mental Health concluded: "The consensus among the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teen-agers who watch the programs."

As a mental health professional, I am greatly concerned about this because U.S. children are exposed to extremely high levels of TV violence. Approximately five to six violent acts occur per hour on prime-time television, and 20 to 25 violent acts are shown each hour of Saturday morning children's TV programs.

Cable TV adds to the problem by introducing new, more violent programs while recycling older violent broadcasts.

A survey conducted by the Center for Media and Public Affairs counted 1,846 violent scenes broadcast and

cablecast between 6 a.m. and midnight on a single day. The most violent periods were between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Experts estimate that by the time young people graduate from high school, they will have viewed more than 200,000 acts of violence portrayed in various media.

Research evidence suggests that children exposed to heavy amounts of violence in the media are much more likely to be aggressive, to exhibit violent behavior and to view violence as an effective way of resolving conflicts. They may view the world as mean, scary and threatening and may become desensitized to violence.

Too much time in front of a TV, movie or video screen can be unhealthy in other ways as well:

- Time spent viewing television or movies or playing video games is time spent not exercising.

- Countless food commercials aimed at children promote unhealthy foods and don't give children the full picture about a well-balanced diet.

- Television programs and movies glamorize alcohol use, smoking and drug use and portray these actions as risk-free. Children must be taught the potential dangers of these behaviors.

- Sexual activity is commonplace on television and in the movies, sending the message that everybody does it, and

without consequences. Some researchers link television and movies with increases in teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Not only the health community, but all responsible adults need to protest to the television medium when they see programming they know is harmful to children. Until the public takes this responsibility seriously, and the sponsors of the shows are aware we are against what they are making possible for our children to see, this problem will only grow larger.

### BILL TAMMEUS

- The trouble with so many TV shows nowadays is not just that there's no moral to the story, it's that there's no story to the story.

- "Our campaign is prevailing and triumphing in this party and in this country," says Pat Buchanan. Is he reading the papers in the mirror?

- Marilyn Quayle says she expects her husband to run for president some day. The woman two desks over has a more modest hope. She expects her husband to take out the trash some day.

- Thousands more hours of Richard Nixon tapes will be released soon, reports say. With little thought of timing them to hit the peak Christmas market.

CS 97-55

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MAR 10 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

February, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, FC 20554

Commissioner Hundt

We are writing to urge the Federal Communications Commission to hold a public hearing as part of its review of the television industry's ratings system.

The National Association for Family & Community Education and its affiliate, Indiana State Association, are grass-roots organizations which have been actively involved in family issues for the past 60 years. We are very concerned that the family issue of the recently implemented television ratings system does not address the needs of parents.

The questions generated by the current age-based television ratings system deserve a public hearing. We urge you to hold such a hearing soon on this issue which is so important to families in America today.

Sincerely,

Joe M. Paschot  
1124 St. Paul  
Indy's IN 46203

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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Washington, DC 20554

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Sincerely,

Mary Triggott  
809 N. Rural

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February, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Commissioner Susan Ness

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Sincerely,

*The Friendly Neighbor Club*

*Cleta Gonnerman*

*Sue Bryant*

*Irene Gardner*

*Eveline Lykes*

*Betty Peterson*

*Louise Woodcock*

*Cleta Gonnerman Pres.*

*122 Bay 86*

*Hurdland, MO 63547*

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Washington, DC 20554

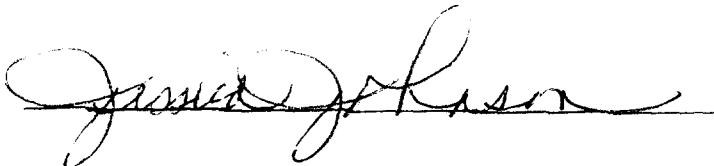
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Sincerely,

Jackie Martin  
3118 Brookside Pkwy  
Indpls In 46218

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FEBRUARY 21, 1997

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

MR. REED HUNDT  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
1919 M. STREET N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20554

DEAR MR. HUNDT:

I AM WRITING ASKING THAT THE NEW RATING SYSTEM BE REJECTED AS IT NOW STANDS.

UNDER THE PRETENSE OF PROVIDING HELP TO PARENTS, THE INDUSTRY HAS DONE THE OPPOSITE. THEY TELL PARENTS THAT ALL PROGRAMS RATED TV-Y, TV-7, TV-G, TV-PG, AND TV-14, REGARDLESS OF CONTENT OR THEME, ARE SUITABLE FOR KIDS AND YOUTH.....AND GET THIS~~~THE PERSON WHO PRODUCES THE PROGRAM IS THE ONE WHO RATES IT! NO INPUT FROM THE VIEWING PUBLIC IS ALLOWED. THERE WILL BE NO CONSISTENT PERSPECTIVE USED IN THE RATINGS SINCE HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS WILL BE DOING THE RATINGS BASED ON THEIR OWN INTEREST.

PLEASE REJECT THE RATINGS AS THEY NOW STAND.

SINCERELY YOURS,

*Lyne Driffin & Family*

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From: Tom Rosenberger

MAR 10 1997

Harrison School

"Where Everybody is Somebody's Neighbor"

To: Chairman F.C.C.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
SECRETARY

44-97

As an elementary school principal in V. Brainerd, Mn., I have written this article to parents to advise them on the new T.V. program rating system.

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I know the F.C.C. was not involved in devising the new rating scale. However, your agency needs to be more involved. The trash on TV today is sickening. It has a dramatic effect on kids.



From Tom Rosenberger

Harrison School

"Where Everybody is Somebody"

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The violence & sex that is  
openly portrayed as "normal"  
behavior is adversely affecting  
a generation of American  
Children. I feel that it is  
unbelievable & unconscionable  
to allow it to continue unchecked.

Thomas L. Rosenberger  
Principal



Phone 218-829-4053  
fax 218-829-8232

Harrison School  
1515 Oak St.

Brainerd, Mn. 56401

(FROM THE PRINCIPAL)

### BEWARE OF THE NEW TV PROGRAM RATING SYSTEM!

In my opinion, the new TV program rating system is a farce!!! (See the new rating system printed below.) There are a number of reasons that lead me to arrive to that conclusion:

1. First of all, the new rating system has not been adequately publicized. Most folks really don't know what the system is. Then, to make matters worse, the system is not applied to the weekly printed schedules of the TV program listings. It is only put on the screen when the program is televised. This means that you have to actually start to view a program before you know how it is rated. Finally, the new rating system is only in use on a voluntary basis by the networks at this time. This means that you will not find the rating on many current programs.
2. The new system, as you can easily see when you read it, does not really give parents the information that they want and need to be able to make an informed decision on whether or not to allow kids to view a program in question. ie: Does it include sex, violence or profanity? Which one? What kind? How much? The ratings will not give you a clue why a program was rated as it was. There is no content analysis!
3. In my view, this system absolves the TV networks from cleaning up their acts-----content wise. It seems to me that this will allow them to go on producing more "junk" programs, filled with violence and sex, because they can always say, "you didn't have to watch it -- we warned you." The bottom line is that they will feel that they are not responsible for the actions you take! What about being responsible for actions that they take???
4. Finally, and in my opinion, here is the biggest farce of all -- "and get this -- the person who produces the program is the one who rates it! No input from the viewing public is allowed". (quoted from a publication produced by the American Family Association.) What a joke! That's a lot like asking the fox to guard the chickens.

I fail to see how this new rating system will help parents and kids to be protected from the trash that is produced by the TV industry. Too bad. Now our next best hope is to wait until we can all afford the new technology that is supposed to be built into the next generation of TV sets that will allow us to totally block out programs that we don't want our kids to watch. In the meantime, if you are so motivated, call or write to the Federal Communications Commissions (FCC) and complain about what's on TV. If we, as concerned educators and parents don't do this --- who will? The address is:

Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Phone: (202)418-2600.

As you can easily guess from my comments, I am very concerned about what our kids are learning while they are in front of the TV set. I know from research findings, as well as from personal observation, that many kids have seen so much violence and sex on TV that they are literally de-sensitized to it. I hope you as parents are concerned, too.

Here's a great alternative: turn off the TV and read with your kids!

#### NEW TV PROGRAM RATING SYSTEM:

- TV-Y: Appropriate for all children. Specifically designed for a very young audience, including children ages 2-6. This program is not expected to frighten younger children.
- TV-Y7: Designed for children age 7 and above. More appropriate for children able to distinguish between make-believe and reality. May include mild physical or comedic violence.
- TV-G: Contains little or no violence, no strong language and little or no sexual dialog or situations.
- TV-PG: This program contains coarse and vulgar language, violence, and/or sexually suggestive dialog and situations. Even the theme itself may call for parental guidance.
- TV-14: This program contains strong sexual content, profane language and/or intense violence.
- TV-M: This program contains extremely profane language, graphic violence and/or explicit sexual content.

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P.O. Box 276

Harrel, Illinois

February 19, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

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MAR 10 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Commissioner Hundt:

I urge the Federal Communications Commission to hold a public hearing as part of its review of the television industry's rating system.

I am a member of the National Association for Family and Community Education and its affiliate the Illinois State Association, grass roots organizations which have been actively involved in family issues for the past 60 years. We are very concerned that the family issue of the recently implemented television ratings system does not address the needs of parents.

The questions generated by the current age-based television ratings system deserve a public hearing. We urge you to hold such a hearing soon on this issue which is so important to families in America today.

Sincerely,

Bruce Griebel

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MR. REED HUNDT  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
1919 M. STREET N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20554

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MAR 10 1997

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY

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PLEASE REJECT THE RATINGS AS THEY NOW STAND.

SINCERELY YOURS.

*Genevieve Wilkerson*

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

February, 1997

The Honorable Chairman Reed Hundt  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D C. 20554

Commissioner Hundt

We are writing to urge the Federal Communications Commission to hold a public hearing as part of its review of the television industry's ratings system

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Sincerely,

Mrs. Betty L. Orr  
F. R. E. Member, Mo.

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Sincerely,

Patricia Deem  
1817 Brookside Ave

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

February, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hundt

We are pleased that the Senate body will hold a hearing on Thursday, February 27th on the issue of the television rating system. Senators McCain [AZ] and Burns [MT] are to be commended in their sponsorship of this Senate Hearing.

The National Association for Family & Community Education, and its affiliated Indiana State Association, supports the content based television rating system, using V [Violence], S [Sex], and L [Language] symbols to indicate the content of a television program.

We believe the 80% of parents surveyed by PTA who want a content-based rating system should be provided an avenue for input into the development and implementation of a television rating system.

We support the Senate's plan for holding a hearing on this sensitive issue which affects all families in America today.

Sincerely,

Steve & Tina Bracken 5414 E 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Indpls IN 46218

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY

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Washington, DC 20554

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Sincerely,

Kim Hall

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

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1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

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Sincerely,

Kubely Hall

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

February, 1997

The Honorable Rachelle Chong  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, FC 20554

Commissioner Chong

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Sincerely,

Angela Mendenhall  
2626 Brookside Ave.

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Sincerely,

Tammy Rohn

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Sincerely,

Glaine M. Scott

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381 Summit Ridge Dr.  
Forsyth, MO 65653

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MAR 10 1977

Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M. Street N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20534

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Mr. Hundt,

Please reject the rating system.  
If a system must be in place, a content-  
based system would be more informative.  
I am a parent and I would like  
to know if a program has violence,  
sex, nudity, bad language, then I  
could better decide if my children  
should watch it.

Thank you!

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Linda Shilling  
381 Summit Ridge Dr.  
Forsyth, MO 65653

CS 97-55



Marsha L. Landis  
200 Mill Pond Rd.  
Sanford, NC 27330

( )  
North Carolina Extension Homemakers  
Lee County, NC

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February 1997

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1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Sincerely,

Marsha L. Landis  
200 Mill Pond Road  
Sanford, NC 27330

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Joan Thellen  
Redmond, WA

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The Thellen Household

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January 27, 1997

MAR 10 1997

FCC

Wireless Telecommunication Bureau  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 644  
Washington, DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

KCPQ (TV)

Dear Commissioner:

I am writing with a complaint about the new television ratings system. Last night my family was watching FOX television following the Superbowl to catch the latest episode of *The X-Files*. We haven't watched the show in some time, so I was initially pleased to see the "TV-14" rating appear in the corner of the screen at the start of the show. My daughter, who recently turned 15, was pleased to find that the show was rated as "safe" enough for her.

My complaint, then, is that whatever "TV-14" is supposed to mean sure doesn't do justice to what I think is appropriate for a 14 year old to watch. The episode was, to say the least, quite disturbing. It contained the following disgusting themes:

- Decapitation (graphically portrayed)
- Explicit autopsy scenes with the severed head
- A villain who was literally made of cancer (yuck!)
- Murder
- Cannibalism

Needless to say, I hardly think that's appropriate for fourteen year olds. Maybe for some, but certainly not something I'd let my daughter watch if I knew about it ahead of time. I'm all for a TV ratings system, but the one the television industry seems to have adopted doesn't work at all. To its credit, the show didn't contain any sex scenes or foul language, which is why I suppose it can get away with a TV-14 rating. Please make the networks switch to a system which tells me what kind of content is in a show, rather than letting some (apparently misguided) industry censor decide what's ok for my child to watch. I would have been much better served by seeing a ratings block at the start of the show which said something like "Mild language, No sexual content, graphic violence."

Thank you,

Joan Thellen

Mrs. Joan Thellen

MMB ENFORCEMENT  
COMPLAINTS  
INVESTIGATION

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C/O Mr. Phil Leonardi  
PO Box 700  
Corvallis, MT 59828  
Jan. 7, 1997

Chairman: Reed E. Hundt  
1919 M Sreet N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20554

MR. INFORMATION  
COMPLAINT  
INVESTIGATION

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Dear Chairman Hundt

We are students at Corvallis High School and we are writing this letter out of our concerns that may interest you. In Mr. Phil Leonardi's class we are learning the Principles of American Democracy. A while ago we did papers on the six principles of democracy. These principles include Popular Sovereignty, Limited Government, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Judicial Review and Federalism. We are concerned about how the Constitution of the United States of America is being destroyed by our government. Well, at least certain parts of the constitution anyway.

In the first amendment of the constitution it states the freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and to petition. This means that these rules are supposed to apply to all citizens of the U.S. Whether it is their points of view, language, color, race, nationality, or the state we are in, we should hold these rights. In the past few years we feel some of these rights may not have been broken, but bent to the furthest extremes by our government.

The constitution was made by our forefathers to help run a government for a new nation. These amendments have little, if any, meaning in today's society. Government has found ways to stretch, bend, push and pull our society until society doesn't care anymore.

Our freedom of speech has been limited by the Federal Communications Commission. Our freedom of choice has been suspended, again, by the Federal Communications Commission. The music we listen to is censored and the televisions we watch are rated by a prehistoric method. These systems don't do anything except violate our rights as U.S.

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